

TOPIC: AAFL Lease of Building in Onepoto Domain



TO: Birkenhead-Northcote Community Board

ON: 21 July 2009

AUTHOR: Chairperson Birkenhead-Northcote Community Board

Summary:

I have always been a strong advocate to utilise this building for Community Use. I and successive Community Boards have requested for years that Council find a community use for the vacated premises of the Soccer Club sitting idle in the Onepoto Domain. Various organisations tried to purchase the building but for various reasons were unable to finance it.

This building was established from monies raised by the Soccer Club, a grant from Council and ASB funding.

As the Soccer Club owned the building we were limited as to what could be done and the Soccer Club had an unreasonably, in our opinion, high price on the building.

In September 2007 we received a report proposing a lease to the AAFL who would utilise and upgrade the premises.

The AAFL has been established for approximately 30 years and has 6 teams that play in the Auckland area with two being based on the North Shore. Onepoto Domain regulation sports field are their home grounds and Onepoto is 1 of only 2 fields on the North Shore which can accommodate the AAFL requirements. The other is Bayswater which is monopolised by Soccer. This building is ideal to accommodate the Clubs needs.

The Club would use the building for meetings, prizegivings and as an operations base for its activities. It would like to promote the sport to schools in the City and raise the profile of Australian Rules Football. The playing seasons for Australian Rules Football is approximately five months each year.

After information was presented to the Board in September 2007, the Board resolved as follows:-

- 1. That the Birkenhead-Northcote Community Board considers the future use of the premises currently owned and occupied by the Glenfield Rovers Soccer Club on*

Onepoto Domain and recommends to the Community Services and Parks Committee that a lease for the site occupied be granted to the Auckland Australian Football League.

- 2. That the offer of the lease is conditional on confirmation from both the Glenfield Rovers AFC and the Australian Football League that legal ownership of the premises has been transferred.*
- 3. That the lease will be for a period of ten years with one right of renewal for ten years.*
- 4. That the terms of the lease will also be in accordance with the Intention of the Onepoto Domain Management Plan.*
- 5. That it will be a condition of the lease agreement that when it is not required for the tenants use that the building will be made available on a casual basis to the users of the domain and to the community groups in the area. The terms of casual letting agreement will be in line with charges made for similar properties in the city.*

Based on this resolution, the AAFL commenced negotiations to acquire the building. By June 2008 the Board had not heard anything back in regards to what was happening with the AAFL and the lease. Therefore, at the 3 June 2008 meeting the Board requested an update on the outcome of the negotiations. The Board had received representations from a resident requesting that the building be removed as it was an “eyesore” and no response received from the AAFL.

In light of this I indicated that I wished to move a Notice of Motion to rescind the Boards resolution of 11 September 2007 and to request that negotiations with AAFL discontinue.

The Notice of Motion in July 2008 revoking the 11 September 2007 resolution was sent to Council but Council did not consider it and after a visit to the Mayor by the AAFL, the Community Board was asked to reconsider the matter.

Unbeknown to the Board, the AAFL and the Rovers had agreed upon a settlement.

I felt that ownership by Council was the best way for the future so we organised a meeting of Mr Brannigan, AAFL and Community Board members.

At a later meeting it was agreed that the building ownership be transferred to Council at no cost and that a lease agreement be made along the lines of all other Council leases and licenses. The AAFL to have a lease of the building and for it to be available for community use for the rest of the year and during the season as the AAFL schedule permits.

The AAFL drew up a management proposal to lay alongside the lease which has been forwarded to Mr Brannigan.

As the AAFL had fulfilled the original resolution there was some question as to our legal obligation that we had made to the AAFL.

As I have said previously, I have always maintained that we should not do away with buildings and premises that can be of benefit to our community and this is a classic example. The crucial element is that the building will be Council owned and therefore we will not have the same situation in the future. Especially to preserve community assets during the rejoin change of governance structure.

I have now been advised that a local resident, Shane Brannigan, met with His Worship the mayor and Councillor Homan who have requested that this item be put on the Boards agenda for a recommendation to Council's Community Services & Parks Committee.

The main concern appears to be the potential for a liquor licence to be issued to allow licensed club premises. With Council ownership this can be controlled and liquor licences do require public notification.

There is a need to maintain as many community facilities as possible. I would not like to see the building neglected as in the past and am confident that Council ownership - with a lease bringing a financial contribution - will enhance the building and control the management.

It is unfortunate that this win/win situation could not have been arrived at earlier.

The AAFL are happy to have a Management Committee - similar to Northcote Citizens - with representatives from AAFL, Residents Association, Community Board and any other user groups.

Chairperson's Recommendation:

1. That the Birkenhead-Northcote Community Board asks the Council to continue negotiations to enable the building to be transferred to Council ownership.
2. That a lease be given to the AAFL with terms and conditions agreed between Council and the AAFL, incorporating the proposed Management Plan submitted by the AAFL and consistent with the Onepoto Domain Management Plan.
3. That a representative of the local residents be given speaking rights at the Council's Community Services & Parks Committee meeting.
4. That the Birkenhead-Northcote Community Board be given speaking rights at the Council's Community Services & Parks Committee meeting.
5. That the AAFL representatives be given speaking rights at the Council's Community Services & Parks Committee.

	Name and title of signatories
Prepared and approved by	Marilyn Nicholls, Customer Services Manager

Date: 14 July 2009